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Enacting Our Faith: Living Out Catholic Social Teaching In Our World Today

Feb 2020

Part 1: Our World Today

CNA Insider
Why in a cheap food paradise, some Singaporeans are still going hungry

https://youtu.be/PQaVds_uFDY

Pulling together in creative ways, to better feed food insecure Singaporeans


https://youtu.be/dLVSKx8WI70

Summary of the Articles

What is food insecurity?

- To be severely food insecure means not knowing where your next meal is coming from, having to skip one, or even go an entire day without eating.
- But more generally, food insecurity refers to the lack of access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, due to financial or physical constraints.

Who are the food insecure in Singapore?

- Some 4.1 per cent of Singaporeans faced moderate to severe food insecurity between 2016 and 2018
- They are a surprisingly diverse group: One that can’t be defined by housing type, family size, age, or income group alone.
“We often think people who stay in larger flats don’t need financial assistance since they could afford a big flat,” he said. “But many of them might be just one retrenchment or one serious illness away from a tight financial situation.”

Families who are working hard yet still struggle to put food on the table are common among the food-insecure.
What are the consequences of food insecurity?

- The typical diet of a person who is food insecure – processed meals high in carbohydrates and sodium, low on nutritional value – puts them at higher risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiac disease, and other chronic illnesses.
- In the long run, the cost of this is also borne by the country in the form of increased public healthcare spending.
- Children who experienced food insecurity in their first five years of life were more likely to be lagging behind in social, emotional and, to some degree, cognitive skills.
- When resources are scarce for adults, it can affect the ability to make decisions or see the bigger picture – for example, planning to get a better job. Attention is focused on immediate needs, like what food to put on the table, while the stress of having to worry about this day after day can reduce bandwidth for long-term planning.

Do governmental welfare schemes help?

- “The reality is that many households either don’t know about the welfare schemes, so they won’t come forward; or they may feel embarrassed about identifying themselves, because of the stigma associated with seeking help.”
- Several families brought up the frustration of applying for aid at the SSO or bigger welfare organisations - the need to fill up multiple forms, and to apply for renewal of assistance every few months with the re-submission of documentation.

Charities plugging the gap

- There are some 125 food support organisations with an online presence, according to the Lien Centre study, and they range from non-profits and Institutions of a Public Character (IPC), soup kitchens and Meals-On-Wheels providers, to informal ground-up groups.
- But the ultimate goal for the volunteers is to help the family become self-reliant. “Sending food can’t be a long-term solution,” Fion pointed out.

Reflect/Think:

- What emotions came to the fore as I read this article or watched the video?
- Which parts of the article struck you? Sit with them and allow the Spirit to reveal why and how they struck you. Ask the Spirit for the grace of self-awareness, to show you how these thoughts and feelings reflect you as a person.

Part 2: Our Faith – Catholic Social Teaching

Which principles of Catholic Social Teaching are related to food insecurity?

- Principle of the Universal Destination of Goods
- Principle of Solidarity
1) Principle of the Universal Destination of Goods

- God intended for all the world’s resources to be enjoyed by everyone, and not just a few. God destined the earth and all it contains for all men and all peoples so that all created things would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity.
- Each person must have access to the level of well-being necessary for his full development. We should have a preferential option for the poor and see to it that the most vulnerable also have what they need.

2) Principle of Solidarity

- Every human person is connected to every other person. We are called to stand together as one human family.
Reflect:

- Do I find myself trying to ignore these issues or perhaps wanting to stand in solidarity with my fellow brothers and sisters but not quite knowing how?
- Standing in solidarity with those facing food insecurity could mean listening to their stories with an open mind and heart, withholding judgement. Am I able to create such a mental and emotional space to “be one with” them?
- The principle of the universal destination of goods comes from the virtue of justice, which seeks out what is fair and right. How willing am I to give of what I have in order to pursue justice?
Pray:
God, you have given all peoples on common origin.
It is your will that they be gathered together
as one family in yourself.
Fill the hearts of humankind with the fire of your love
and with the desire to ensure justice for all.
By sharing the good things you give us,
may we secure an equality for all
our brothers and sisters throughout the world.
May there be an end to division, strife, and war.
May there be a dawning of a truly human society
built on love and peace.
We ask this in your name. Amen.

Enacting Our Faith: Take Action

Take a step to better understand the needs and challenges of the poor in our nation.
For example, reach out, have a conversation and accompany the members of the St Vincent de Paul Society in your parish in their care for their Friends in Need (FINs).

Decide on a small step that you can take to offer a small gesture of help to those in your workplaces or neighbourhood who you know are struggling with food security challenges.

Discuss with your fellow young adult friends on how all of you can reach out to other young adults in your parish to help them better understand the situation, reflect on how young adults can better get involved in the social mission of the church.

We can also choose to donate and help in the following ways:

HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

Supporting our Catholic Charities on NTUC Shop and Donate efforts:

1) Boys’ Town
(https://donate.fairprice.com.sg/VwoDisplayView?catalogId=10201&storeId=10151#boysTown)

2) Canossaville Children & Community Services

3) Montfort Care
(https://donate.fairprice.com.sg/VwoDisplayView?catalogId=10201&storeId=10151#montfortCare)
4) Marymount Centre
(https://donate.fairprice.com.sg/VwoDisplayView?catalogId=10201&storeId=10151#marymountCentre)

*Supporting other Charities:*
Food From The Heart: To volunteer, visit https://www.foodfromtheheart.sg or WhatsApp 81280432

Food Bank Singapore: To donate, visit https://www.giving.sg/the-food-bank-singapore-ltd

Free Food For All: To donate or volunteer, visit https://freefood.org.sg

National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre: To volunteer or donate to various COVID-19 charity efforts, visit https://www.giving.sg/sgunited

TOUCH Community Services: To volunteer for Meals-On-Wheels delivery, call 68046565

Willing Hearts: To volunteer, visit http://www.willinghearts.org.sg